DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 434 598 HE 032 376

AUTHOR	Bender, Louis W.
TITLE	State Roundtable Case Studies: Idaho and South Dakota. Western Policy Exchange Project.
INSTITUTION	Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, Boulder, CO.
SPONS AGENCY	Kellogg Foundation, Battle Creek, MI.
REPORT NO	WICHE-2A324
PUB DATE	1999-04-00
NOTE	30p.; For related documents, see HE 032 373-374.
AVAILABLE FROM	Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, P.O. Box 9752, Boulder, CO 80301-9752. Tel: 303-541-0200.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	Case Studies; Change Agents; Change Strategies; *Educational Change; *Educational Environment; Educational Objectives; Higher Education; Organizational Change; *Policy Formation; Position Papers; Regional Planning; *Statewide Planning; Strategic Planning; Systems Analysis
IDENTIFIERS	Idaho; South Dakota; *Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education

ABSTRACT

These two case studies were commissioned by the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) as part of its Western Policy Exchange (WPE) Project, in an effort to understand the dynamics and perceived consequences of a "state roundtable" approach to fostering partnerships in education in order to advance systemic change and reforms in higher education. Idaho and South Dakota were chosen for their different experiences with the WPE project. The case studies involved attendance at state roundtables, a review of documents, and site interviews with legislators, regents, and business leaders. Among the conclusions drawn from the case studies are that an understanding of and belief in the roundtable process is essential if it is to be employed as a systemic change tool; WICHE provides valuable resources for planning, organizing, and implementing the roundtable process; willingness to assume leadership risk is critical to success; roundtables must consider the uniqueness of each state; participants must be selected with care; background papers help in orienting and focusing participants; trust building is most effective if a group addresses its own internal shortcomings before expecting other groups to take corrective actions; and the cycle for effective use of the roundtable process is 5 to 6 years. (CH)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

WICHE Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education — Western Policy Exchange Project

Supported by a grant from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation

ED 434 598

State Roundtable Case Studies: Idaho and South Dakota

by

Dr. Louis W. Bender

Consultant

April 1999

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

C. Mathews

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☒ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

HE 032 376

2B

2

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

WESTERN INTERSTATE COMMISSION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

WESTERN POLICY EXCHANGE PROJECT

State Roundtable Case Studies:

Idaho and South Dakota

Submitted by
Dr. Louis W. Bender
Professor Emeritus
The Florida State University

Supported by a grant from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation

April 1999

Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education

The Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) is a public, interstate agency established to promote and to facilitate resource sharing, collaboration, and cooperative planning among the western states and their colleges and universities. Member and affiliated states are:

Alaska	Idaho	Oregon
Arizona	Montana	South Dakota
California	Nevada	Utah
Colorado	New Mexico	Washington
Hawaii	North Dakota	Wyoming

WICHE's broad objectives are to:

- Strengthen educational opportunities for students through expanded access to programs,
- Assist policymakers in dealing with higher education and human resource issues through research and analysis,
- Foster cooperative planning, especially that which targets the sharing of resources.

This publication was prepared by the Office of Policy and Information, which is involved in the research, analysis, and reporting of information on public policy issues of concern in the WICHE states. A grant from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation provided partial funding for our Western Policy Exchange project and the individual state roundtables described in this report.
For further information, please contact Cheryl D. Blanco, Director, Policy and Information, P.O. Box 9752, Boulder, CO 80301-9752; Telephone: (303) 541-0224; FAX: (303) 541-0291.

Published April 1999 by the
Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education
P.O. Box 9752
Boulder, Colorado 80301-9752
Telephone: (303) 541-0200
An Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer
Printed in the United States of America
Publication Number: 2A324

Table of Contents

Executive Summary v

I. Background 1

II. South Dakota 5

III. Idaho 9

IV. Outcomes 13

V. Assessment of the Roundtable Process 17

VI. Assessment of Roundtables as a Policy Change Strategy 19

VII. Conclusions, Implications for Other States, and Recommendations 23

Executive Summary

The Western Policy Exchange (WPE) project began in 1996, partially funded by a three-year grant from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation, carrying out a coordinated approach of multistate forums in the 15 state WICHE region as well as individual state-specific "state roundtables" in a quest to foster partnerships of educators, policymakers, and state decision makers to advance systemic change/reforms in higher education. During the past two years more than 400 legislative, business/industry, executive branch and higher education leaders participated in a total of 14 state roundtables in Arizona, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, South Dakota, and Washington.

In an effort to understand the role, dynamics, and perceived consequences of the state roundtable process, WICHE commissioned case studies of Idaho and South Dakota, since they represent some of the comparative differences among the participants. South Dakota had two years of experience in the Pew Higher Education Roundtables in 1995 and 1996 and therefore represented an example of a four-year-long process, while Idaho and the other states had only the two-year WPE experience. South Dakota carried out WICHE/WPE state roundtables in June and October 1997, and a third roundtable in November 1998. Idaho also carried out three state roundtables, with the first occurring in October 1997, the second in April 1998, and the third in October 1998.

The case study methodology included attendance as an observer at one of the state roundtables in each state, a review of papers and documents produced either in preparation for or as a result of the roundtables, as well as a series of site interviews, carried out in February 1999 with legislators, regents, and state leaders in Pierre, South Dakota, and with a similar group, including major business leaders, in Boise, Idaho.

South Dakota Outcomes. Both systemic policy and systemic behavior changes were reported by the interviewees in South Dakota. Some systemic policy change during the initial two-year Pew Roundtables was documented, including a commitment by the universities and the Board of Regents to generate through efficiencies the equivalent of 10 percent of their state general funds budget for "investment" reallocation in seven priority areas. Titled "The Reinvestment through Efficiencies Program," this initiative had re-directed more than $10 million dollars through internal efficiencies to such priorities as technology infrastructure, curriculum redesign, asset protection, economic development, K-12 linkages, and investments in change, as well as centers of excellence by the end of fiscal year 1998. This action by the higher education leadership was credited by the legislature with earning trust and respect, which motivated the public policymakers to move from critics to supporters within the past two years.

Two significant legislative policy changes credited to the WICHE/WPE state roundtables by interviewees include the change from an enrollment-driven funding formula for the six universities to a combined base and incentive funding budget. The other legislative policy emerging from the state roundtable discussions was acceptance of a proposed strategy by the Board of Regents for a salary competitiveness pool of funds to be derived by board action in sweeping certain unfilled faculty lines, by a slight increase in student fees, and by new incentive monies from the legislature. In passing the appropriation for this program, the legislature also called for a new policy basing faculty salaries on performance rather than across-the-board raises.

Without exception, interviewees asserted that changes in behavior took place in South Dakota as a result of the state roundtable

process which, in the view of several people, was more significant for the long-term than the legislative changes. Reportedly, prior to the roundtable process, the legislature accused the Board of Regents of not managing the system while the universities and the board viewed the legislature as ill informed and unwilling to fund higher education appropriately in the state. A legislative leader vividly described a transformation from suspicion and even hostility to one of a partnership approach as a result of the faith, trust, and confidence which emerged from the roundtable experience. He concluded the South Dakota Board of Regents now approaches the legislature as a unified system, with the executive director being the recognized presenter for the higher education system appropriations request. The state roundtable was unanimously praised as an effective tool for bringing understanding and unity of purpose to different constituent groups who differ on the means but have a common belief in and commitment to the end: quality higher education that meets the needs of the state and its citizens.

Idaho. While Idaho only had the WICHE/WPE roundtable experience, both policy and behavior changes were identified as outcomes by the interviewees. Interestingly, the Idaho State Board of Education acted initially by focusing internally following the first roundtable to address policy needs of its own, as had the South Dakota Board of Regents. The Idaho board's product was the drafting and adoption of an *Institutional Role and Missions* document (the first since 1983), designed to be consumer-oriented and focused more on vision, cooperation, and collaboration than had the previous "fixed in time" document. The legislature responded by approving incentive funding for scholarships and technology as requested by the State Board in 1998. In addition, enhancement for salary competitiveness was included in the appropriations bill under consideration in the legislature at the time of the case study interviews. A majority of the interviewees expressed the view that the Idaho legislature will move from its strategy of reallocation to a new funding strategy in the years ahead as a result of the state roundtables. A major outcome of the Idaho roundtables was the strong support of the business and industry leadership as well as improved interinstitutional relationships, including cooperation between, as well as articulation of programs among, the universities and community colleges in Idaho. The interviewees also identified behavior changes among the constituent groups similar to those of South Dakota as a significant outcome of their state roundtable process.

Schematic of the Roundtable Process. Based on observations of the key leaders for the state roundtables in South Dakota and Idaho, a schematic flow of the process was developed which may be useful to states considering this tool for future use in gaining systemic change (see Table 1). The conveners, coordinators, and facilitators for both states agreed with the conceptualization and felt it correctly reflected the actual and anticipated evolution of the roundtable process for their state.

Institutionalization. If the state roundtable is so universally seen as such an effective tool for systemic change, then can it be institutionalized? Without exception, interviewees felt it would be used effectively in future years in their state as long as it was given direction and support by an "owner constituency," such as the system board. But what if the leader leaves?

When the executive director of the South Dakota Board of Regents was asked what would happen if he were to leave, he reflected and then commented that any successor would probably not use the tool since such a leader would understandably institute his/her own change strategy. A startling and impressive reply was given by the chairman of the Board of Regents when he was asked the same question. He immediately declared that the state

Table 1
Stages of Roundtable Evolution

Years Needed	Developmental Stage	Activities
1-2	Socialization	• Determine nature and state of "disconnect" • Accept others' roles/responsibilities • Self appraisal and accept "common good" goal • Seek cooperation/collaborative actions • Build toward partnership alliances/actions
2-3	Priority Setting	• Identify the issues, challenges, opportunities • Establish state and system goals • Set priorities based on realities, and constraints • Determine readiness and timeliness • Assess key players
3-4	Agenda Building	• Determine courses of action • Analyze prospects and action requirements • Set game plan and timetable • Enlist key players/supporters
4-5	Action	• Implement strategy • Monitor progress and adjust as needed • Assess outcomes and prepare for next cycle
5-6	Revitalization and Recycling	• Recognize past achievers, achievements • Recycle • Enlist, orient, support new stakeholders/ policymakers • Increase public awareness, understanding efforts

roundtable had been such a valuable and effective tool that the board would actually establish knowledge of and commitment to the roundtable process as one of the criteria for employing a successor executive director.

Implications. Based on the experiences of South Dakota and Idaho, as well as the perceptions of key players in their state roundtables, the following implications are suggested:

- An understanding and belief in the roundtable process is essential if it is to be successfully employed as a systemic change tool.
- WICHE is a valuable resource for assisting in planning, organizing and implementing the roundtable process for its region as well as providing advice and counsel for other regions in the country.
- Ownership is critical to success, which requires a certain belief in the need for systemic change and a willingness to assume the risks in giving leadership and direction.
- A state roundtable must be designed with the uniqueness of the state in mind.
- Care must be taken in selection of participants.

- Background papers can be helpful for orienting and focusing participants.
- In spite of the potential for journalistic sensationalism, some states can have the press in attendance even in open discussion stages of the state roundtable. It would be advisable to know the posture of the local press, however.
- State roundtables can lead to both institutional as well as systemic change.
- Although different constituent groups embrace quite different beliefs and approaches, there is a "common good" universal which is the basis for success of the roundtable process.
- Trust building is most effective when a constituent group takes the initiative to address its own internal shortcomings on a particular issue before expecting other groups to take corrective initiatives at their level.
- The cycle for effective use of the roundtable process for systemic change is between five and six years.

Recommendations. It is recommended that WICHE seek additional external financial support to assist member states to use the roundtable tool over a five- or six-year period in order to verify the long-term benefits of the process for achieving systemic change. It is further recommended that key leaders in the present project be asked to serve as an advisory panel for future WICHE roundtable efforts. Finally, it is recommended that the W. K. Kellogg Foundation consider a grant to build on the accomplishments of the WPE project.

I. Background

The Project. The Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) has earned an enviable record serving the 15 Western states in its region since its creation nearly 50 years ago. Established as a compact by formal legislative action of the states and U. S. Congress, WICHE's mission has been to facilitate resource sharing among the higher education systems as well as promote the exchange of ideas, programs, and practices among the states. It has achieved sharing among the 15 states through such activities as Student Exchange Programs, Mental Health Programs, Faculty Diversity Initiative, Cooperative for Educational Telecommunications, and Policy and Information, as well as the three-year project covered in this study known as the Western Policy Exchange.

The Western Policy Exchange (WPE) was partially funded by a three-year grant which began in 1996 and ends in 1999 to WICHE by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation. WICHE proposed a three-year, coordinated approach to foster partnerships of educators, policymakers, and state decision makers who can develop a stronger design/process for systemic higher education policymaking in the West. The three goals identified in the grant proposal for the project included:

- To improve the policymaking framework in the West in order to bring about institutional transformation and systemic change in higher education
- To provide a coordinated and targeted platform for developing specific strategies to advance systemic reforms in higher education
- To create regional solutions and efficiencies in response to shared problems and opportunities.

Three of the anticipated outcomes of the project relevant to this study were as follows:

- With WICHE collaboration member states will have developed and implemented an agenda to promote systemic change
- Participants will have identified specific options in their states to respond to diverse policy concerns
- Participants will have drawn on their workshop experiences and other resources to promote better informed decisionmaking and policy formulation in the respective states.

The WICHE/WPE project encompassed two components. One was a series of multistate forums carried out in the region to examine problems and common challenges and then explore innovative strategies at the state and regional level to overcome real and potential barriers to cost-effective, quality higher education. Participants represented leadership from such sectors as legislators and staff, governor's office staff, business/industry, institutions, higher education system governing and coordinating boards, trustees, faculty, and K-12.

The other component of the project, state roundtables, began in year two of the project and is the focus of this study. The roundtable process fostered sustained discussion of higher education policy issues in the individual states and facilitated the exchange of ideas, programs, and practices within each state. This study examines the goals, structure, process, leadership, participants, and outcomes of the roundtables in Idaho and South Dakota in order to identify implications and recommendations for other states seeking to foster systemic change.

The Roundtable Strategy. WICHE offered to work with participating states to create and facilitate the series of state roundtable

discussions involving educational policymakers and other key constituents to identify the state's priorities for higher education and to foster informed discussions regarding what changes are needed in response to those priorities. WICHE made a commitment to provide some financial support from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation grant, as well as technical support and assistance to insure each participating state a successful state roundtable process. WICHE/WPE support included:

- Advice on organizing and structuring the state roundtable meetings and on potential participants.
- Limited financial support from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation grant.
- An outside facilitator to assist with roundtable meetings.
- A WICHE staff member to attend the meetings and produce a discussion paper that could be used for further conversation.
- Resource materials, such as background papers and other written materials; expert resource persons; relevant audio and video conference presentations; and multistate workshops/seminars on specific high-interest topics.

In order to be a participating state, certain requirements had to be met. First, the state needed to appoint state roundtable co-conveners charged with helping to recruit participants and leading a series of state roundtable discussions. Second, a state coordinator needed to be appointed who would lead in scheduling the roundtable meetings, coordinate logistics, develop and disseminate materials and other needed responsibilities including being the primary contact and administrative support person for the project within that state. The third requirement of participating states was to invite a broad-based group of policymakers and educational and business leaders, whose commitment and sustained participation could be anticipated and whose credibility and influence would be essential to a successful process.

Case Study States. One of the original assumptions undergirding the state roundtable process was that each state would have its own priorities and challenges; therefore, the process should afford individuality. Several orientation and planning meetings were carried out by WICHE with the roundtable conveners and coordinators during the project, when experiences and assessments were shared in anticipation of organizing and structuring the meetings. Invariably at these meetings, consensus resulted in the recognition that both commonalties as well as differences could be observed when looking at state-by-state comparisons. WICHE sought feedback from this group of conveners and coordinators over the course of the project with two conclusions emerging. First, it was agreed each state did have different challenges and opportunities; therefore, it was better to address state-specific issues rather than a single issue common to the region. Second, there was complete agreement that the roundtable process was successful in every case, though in varying degrees, usually related to length and scope of experience with the process.

During the past year more than 400 legislative, business/industry, and higher education leaders participated in 14 state roundtables held in Arizona, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, South Dakota, and Washington to consider higher education issues within their own state. WICHE support and some funding assistance by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation made this possible. In an effort to understand the role, dynamics, and perceived consequences of the state roundtables for specific participating states, WICHE commissioned the case studies reported in this document.

Idaho and South Dakota were chosen for case study since they represent some of the comparative differences among the state roundtable participants. Idaho, as most of the

other states, had no previous experience with the roundtable process, while South Dakota had actively participated in the Pew Higher Education roundtables in 1995 and 1996. In many ways, South Dakota served as a role model for the Western Policy Exchange project and Executive Director Tad Perry was an invaluable member of the WICHE planning team. On the other hand, South Dakota is one of the few WICHE states where population projections are not forecasting major growth in new students, while Idaho is among those envisioning new student populations to be served. Idaho's economy has grown and is strong while South Dakota's higher education system is confronted with stable state funding. Finally, these states were selected because they were willing to have an outsider review their state roundtable experience, and they graciously assisted in logistics and arrangements for site interviews, use of documents, and other significant assistance.

II. South Dakota

Context. South Dakota's system of public higher education is made up of six residential universities under a single, constitutionally rooted governing board known as the South Dakota Board of Regents. The board's authority includes adoption of policies, approval or removal of educational programs, selection and evaluation of system and institutional executives, setting of annual budgets, tuition and fees, management of facilities as well as legislative budget requests. The unified system's chief executive officer, the executive director, administers the policies of the board and serves as the principal spokesperson on higher education issues. The institutional executive officers, presidents and superintendents, report to the board through the executive director.

The general population of South Dakota of about three-quarters of a million is not expected to grow over the next decade and the number of high school graduates is projected to decline by about 5 percent over the same period. However, significant growth in certain occupations requiring a college education is expected for the state. Per capita personal income in 1996 was 3.28 per cent below the average for its eight-state region and the average faculty salary in South Dakota's universities trailed those of surrounding states by 16.62 percent. One of the early state roundtable participants declared, "Other more pressing social needs and forces are absorbing increasingly scarce resources. It's not that higher education is not valued, but either you must do more with less or less with less."

Major Issues. During the 1995 legislative session two resolutions directed toward the Board of Regents identified issues that were viewed as evidence of "an apparent sense of 'disconnect' between universities and state policymakers." Senate Concurrent Resolution 1 called for a long-term plan to support efficiencies in all institutions under its control, and Senate Concurrent Resolution 2 sought continued examination of feasible procedures to reduce the total cost of higher education through the consolidation of programs and services, the utilization of distance learning and interinstitutional cooperation and sharing of system resources.

Roundtable Initiators. Discussions about South Dakota's participation as a university system in the national Pew Higher Education Roundtable college and university laboratory program began following the 1995 legislative session. The disconnect between policymakers and higher education was openly recognized by all parties. Several regents and Executive Director Tad Perry listened to a panel discussion on the roundtable approach at the Association of Governing Boards Conference in the spring of 1995. From this experience, the executive director encouraged the system to use this approach, while simultaneously encouraging the Pew roundtable to extend their laboratory to a state system. Although no external financial support was provided, the Pew program gave technical assistance and the appeal of its name to the project. The first roundtable session under this sponsorship took place in Sioux Falls in June 1995, and the second was held the following October. For each session there were two roundtable groups with the regents' executive director being the sole person to participate in both. Thus, a total of 59 persons participated in the initial roundtables. Among the membership of each group were four legislators, three presidents, nine faculty, three administrators, four regents, five business/community leaders, one governor's office representative and the regents' executive director. The Pew Higher Education Roundtable provided background material as well as a facilitator. The two groups met on consecutive days in order to use the same facilitator. Between the

June and October sessions participants were asked to talk with other persons about desired changes in higher education and submit these to the executive director for compilation and circulation for discussion at the fall session. The product of these two roundtables was a paper titled *Closing the Seams*, which was used extensively in subsequent events. For example, each of the six universities used the paper for a roundtable held on each campus during the fall and spring session for a group made up of faculty, students, community representatives, administrators, and area legislators.

A prelegislative session policymaker roundtable was held in January 1996, followed by a postlegislative session roundtable for the same group in May 1996. There were 20 legislators (including leadership from the four caucuses and key persons on the Appropriations and Education Committees), the director of finance and budget, as well as the governor's chief of staff and chief of operations and nine regents among the policymaker roundtable participants. The Board of Regents' proposal, "Reinvestment through Efficiencies," was the background information used for the January session. The roundtable is credited with "bridging the disconnect" between higher education and the policymakers, since the regents demonstrated that self-directed change is possible when the Council of University Presidents agreed to redirect 10 percent of the general fund budget to targeted priority investments including technology infrastructure, curriculum redesign, asset protection, economic development, K-12 linkages, investments in change, as well as centers of excellence. In turn, the governor pledged not to reduce state funding and permit the universities to reinvest money saved through prudent management and services. The postlegislative session policymaker roundtable is credited with being the springboard for the Board of Regents to prepare its *Visions for a New Millennium* paper, which presents concepts and proposals for the university system to address in meeting the challenges of the 21st century.

Additional roundtables were held in 1996 including a focused roundtable on K-12 linkages in April, a business-focused roundtable in October, and an agriculture-focused roundtable the same month. With such extensive and successful experience with the roundtable process, it was fortuitous that Tad Perry and South Dakota volunteered to participate in the WICHE/WPE roundtable project, as we shall see in later discussion.

WICHE/WPE State Roundtables. Three state roundtables assisted by WICHE/WPE took place in South Dakota, with the first held on June 30, 1997, the second on October 23, 1997, and the third roundtable on November 30, 1998. Outside observers at each of the roundtables were astonished by the esprit de corps, candidness, and "issue focus" of the participants. There was a proactive spirit of priority setting and agenda for action-building that seemed to permeate the purposeful discussion, even though debate of different points of view as well as conflicting strategies were communicated from time to time throughout the day. Nevertheless, each event produced some consensus on challenges confronting the policymakers as well as some of the system or legislative policy needed to move forward.

The first state roundtable had a total attendance of 38, of whom eight were outsiders or regents staff. The 30 active participants included 13 legislators; one representative each from the governor's office, the Bureau of Finance and Management, the Legislative Research Council, and the Legislative Audit; as well as seven members of the Board of Regents, three university presidents, as well as the Regents' executive director. The outside facilitator was Dennis Jones of The National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS), who had prepared a paper on

funding structures for higher education which had been included in the letters of invitation to the participants. Tad Perry and State Representative Larry Gabriel served as the co-conveners, setting the stage with opening comments by questioning whether the existing formula for higher education in South Dakota allowed the state to set long-term goals and priorities. Thus, the primary topic for the event was on finance, funding approaches, and state priorities connected to the funding prócess. Among the themes discussed during the day were the following:

- How can South Dakota move away from enrollment-based funding and toward performance-based funding?
- What are the institutions willing and able to invest in new programs and/or eliminate others to best accommodate student and state needs?
- Does the short and fixed budget cycle impede the type of change which requires futuristic planning and long-term actions?
- How can the state deal with all campus instruction and create incentives to serve nontraditional students?

By the end of the day there was consensus that the existing funding formula in South Dakota did not lend itself to long-term goals/priorities or long-term policymaking. Roundtable participants concluded that policymakers and education leaders needed to have a conversation about identifying unified goals and focus priorities for higher education in the state. It also agreed that the state must deal with off-campus instruction and create incentives to serve non-traditional students. Thus, South Dakota requires a funding mechanism which serves the state and its citizens rather than the needs of the individual institutions. Since the South Dakota student population is expected to remain relatively constant, the enrollment-based funding formula should be reconsidered.

The second WICHE/WPE roundtable took place on October 23, 1997, with 20 participants plus five observers or staff. Eight regents, three legislators, and three institutional presidents were among the participants. Dennis Jones again served as facilitator, as did Executive Director Tad Perry and State Representative Larry Gabriel as co-conveners. The focus of the group was on a proposed alternative to the state higher education funding formula. Suggested changes to the existing enrollment-driven funding formula included using a base budget approach that would not change state funding based on enrollment swings. Enrollment changes at institutions would be funded from the marginal revenue gained from additional tuition revenues. In addition, participants embraced an approach for defining specific state policy goals and using a budget incentive strategy that would permit institutions to retain resources if they meet established targets. The main impetus for change was to stabilize the annual swings in institutional base budgets that occur with an enrollment driven approach and give the institutions an opportunity to approach budgets over a multiple-year period.

There was review of the "Reinvestment Goals through Efficiencies" program of the Board of Regents, which occurred during the first two-year Pew roundtable process. A number of other comments or questions related to the proposed funding plan were discussed leading to a consensus that the proposal was a "positive and progressive approach." A specific part of the new plan called for 5 percent of institutional base budgets to be earmarked for incentive-based funding in five priority policy areas. The meeting also focused on faculty salary competitiveness in order for South Dakota to keep its best faculty. The regents' staff was requested to work on the faculty salary proposal and seek support for the faculty salary issue.

The discussions at these 1997 roundtables provided the basis for legislative consideration during the 1998 legislative session and the fiscal year 1999 higher education budget decisions.

Again, the Board of Regents used the tactic of having staff prepare a paper, *Connecting Higher Education Policy To University Funding*, which was distributed as part of the invitation to participants and provided the group with an advanced work product and substantive background for the roundtable discussion.

The 1998 roundtables were redesigned to meet new priorities. A major objective was to begin to address issues related to legislative term limits that will bring major leadership changes and a loss of "institutional memory." Thus, prior to the third state roundtable, a series of "mini" legislative roundtables were held at four locations throughout the state during the month of August 1998. Executive Director Tad Perry and senior legislative leaders Representative Mitch Richter and Senator Barbara Everist, who served as the co-conveners and facilitators and on WICHE's Legislative Advisory Committee, used these meetings for broadening the understanding and support of legislators for the new funding initiatives and to identify issues related to higher education and accountability. All incumbent legislators with proven commitment to higher education from each of the four areas of the state were deliberately urged to attend and share their views on the higher education formula, incentives, faculty salaries, and state priorities.

At the third state roundtable held on November 30, 1998, new Appropriations Chairman Mitch Richter of the House of Representatives and Senator Barbara Everist served as co-conveners along with Executive Director Tad Perry. Dennis Jones of NCHEMS again served as outside facilitator. There were 26 invited attendees in addition to five observers or regents' staff. Nine of the participants were from the legislature and seven from the Board of Regents; five presidents as well as one person from the Bureau of Finance and Management were in attendance. Issues identified in the miniround tables were summarized and used as one part of the discussion for the designated topic on higher education accountability. Among some of the themes discussed were:

- Are the links between higher education and economic development understood and measurable?
- What higher education programs and delivery systems make sense given the current policy and economic environments?
- Can the state provide sufficient option to students in an efficient and cost effective way?
- Are the vocational schools serving the community college purpose or are two distinct sectors necessary?
- Are there policy barriers to the use of performance-based salary increase decisions that should be considered?
- Should the state remove policy conditions that advantage specific groups of students in meeting the cost of tuition?

The discussion led to a general consensus that accountability and measurability of progress at the institutional and system level is both desirable and possible. A significant contribution to the workshop and the discussion was a policy paper prepared by the regents' staff during the summer, titled *Connecting Actions to Public Policy*, which documented nine Board of Regents' policy goals with 53 specific actions or achievements to verify system accountability for the states' policymakers. The same document included a list of actions anticipated by the board as part of its next fiscal year agenda.

III. Idaho

Context. All public education from elementary through graduate levels in Idaho is under a single constitutional governing body known as the State Board of Education. The board consists of eight members, with seven appointed by the governor to five-year terms and the superintendent of public instruction who is elected to a four-year term. The State Board governs the State Department of Education, the four public senior institutions of higher education, vocational education, and the Eastern Idaho Technical College, a two-year postsecondary institution with program approval and state funding budget oversight for two community colleges which are locally sponsored and funded.

The presidents of these seven institutions are members of a Presidents' Council, which serves in an advisory capacity to the State Board on state higher education issues. The scope of responsibility of the State Board includes a Division of Vocational Education, a Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, a School for Deaf and Blind, Public Television, and the State Library and Historical Society. An executive director serves as the chief executive officer of the State Board but the presidents report directly to the State Board rather than through the executive director, whose function is described more as one of administrative coordination and facilitation for the higher education institutions rather than a chancellor CEO function.

The general population of Idaho exceeds one million and is expected to grow over the next decade, although the size of the traditional college-age group (20-24 years of age) is expected to drop slightly by the year 2005. Historically, agriculture and mining were the backbone of Idaho's economy; however, tourism and manufacturing have become increasingly important. Idaho has been able to attract many of the major corporations, especially in the information technology areas. As a result, growing demand for two-year and four-year college graduates are projected for the state. Tourism in the north, business and industry in the west, and agriculture in the east contribute to regional attitudes and loyalties which can create social and political barriers to consensus on state issues or policies.

Major Issues. A recurring issue in Idaho has been the scope and magnitude of responsibility constitutionally assigned to the State Board of Education. In 1983 an Idaho Task Force on Higher Education recommended a Board of Regents, separate from the Board of Education, be established to govern the public universities and coordinate the community colleges. This recommendation had the endorsement of the Idaho Association of Commerce and Industry, based on the belief that the complexities and difficulties of the various constituents of the State Board warranted separate governing boards for K-12 and higher education. Fourteen years later a bill was introduced in the legislature which would have created such separate governing boards; however, it was determined that the constitutional assignment could not be changed by legislative action.

Another recurrent issue, traceable to governance structure, has been two-year postsecondary education, typically identified with community colleges. The two comprehensive community colleges in Idaho are sponsored by local taxing authority and governed by local boards of trustees. While the state funds requested by the community colleges must be made through the State Board, which also has program approval authority over the community colleges, these two institutions

are different than the state-owned and -funded four-year institutions. Further complicating this level of postsecondary education is the fact that Idaho created a separate Division of Vocational Education consistent with the federal Smith Hughes Act and subsequent Vocational Education Act, which has resulted in a number of postsecondary associate-degree-level technical colleges, which offer no academic or college transfer programs and are under the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

In an effort to assure Idahoans of associate degree programs in the midmanagement, paraprofessional, and technician level, the State Board has assigned a "community college education function" to selected public baccalaureate institutions. There have been criticisms of the baccalaureate institutions, based on the belief they have not established the priorities or made the commitment to effectively serve the community college function, while the technical colleges have been criticized for absence of the academic program. The issue has been whether Idaho should create a system of community colleges, although a State Board subcommittee assigned the task of studying the problem and developing an appropriate plan in 1997 reportedly gave up and disbanded in 1998.

Roundtable Initiators. The genesis of the Idaho state roundtables was the first WICHE-sponsored multistate forum held in San Diego, California, as part of the first-year activity of the Kellogg grant. The theme of that forum, "The Transformation of Higher Education," inspired discussion among the Idaho delegation of the need for the various stakeholders in Idaho to convene in order to examine the state and future of higher education in the state. Since WICHE had provided for its Legislative Advisory Committee to meet as part of the same event, several key representatives of the Idaho legislature, the State Board, and business were in attendance and participated in the planning of an Idaho event. Charles Ruch, president of Boise State University and a WICHE commissioner, was also in attendance and assumed the responsibility of the coordinator function for the state roundtable when it became apparent that Rayburn Barton, executive director of the State Board, would be leaving before the series of state roundtables could be carried out. Senator John Hanson, a member of the WICHE Legislative Advisory Committee, agreed to a co-convener role, as did Curtis Eaton, a member of the State Board of Education. The focus of the first roundtable would be on the views and concerns toward higher education by the Idaho business and industry community. Richard Jonsen, WICHE's executive director, agreed to serve as the facilitator for the day.

State Roundtables. Idaho carried out three state roundtables, with the first occurring October 16, 1997, the second on April 29, 1998, and the third on October 14, 1998. The primary purpose of the first state roundtable according to interviewees and the invitational letter was for the business community to express its needs and concerns regarding the education system in Idaho. Unlike the other WICHE states which participated in the WICHE/WPE roundtable project, Idaho was open to the press from the beginning. In fact, an editorial, captioned "Higher Education Summit Is an Ideal Way to Address Critical Issues," appeared in the July 20, 1997, issue of *The Idaho Statesman*, with another editorial in the same newspaper on September 8, titled "Education Summit Offers Chance at Business, Education Alliance." The first state roundtable roster of 35 attendees was made up of 20 business/industry leaders, six of the eight members of the State Board, and presidents from the institutions of higher education.

Another unusual as well as unprecedented circumstance at the first Idaho state roundtable was a declaration at the beginning of the session that the institutional presidents were asked to serve only as resource persons during the day and thus not to be active participants. The presidents not only complied with this request but had to be urged to comment at the end of the day by the roundtable facilitator, who was equally astonished by the "rule of the game" declaration at the beginning of the session. Seven primary themes were identified for the first state roundtable, including:

- There is a perceived lack of cooperation among institutions and higher education sectors.
- Higher education employs institutional-driven rather than client or student-driven delivery methods.
- Institutions and faculty are inflexible and insulated from change.
- There is a declining higher education budget.
- The geography and population distribution of Idaho prevent higher education from being "all things to all people."
- There is a lack of continuous legislative leadership and involvement in higher education.
- There is a lack of positive marketing of higher education, its services, and benefits.

The major lament expressed throughout the session was the absence of more attendees from the legislature with only two active (and one former) legislators present. Concerns of the corporate sector were acknowledged by the institutional leaders during the summary session. They agreed to a proposal that campus-level roundtables be held in the future based on the day's deliberations and preceding the next state roundtable to be held sometime in the spring of 1998. Testimony to the interest and commitment of the participants was the fact that not one person left before the session adjourned, which actually was twenty minutes later than the published adjournment time.

The second state roundtable was held April 29, 1998. The four senior institutions did host individual campus roundtables during the interim; therefore, short presentations were made to review the results and discussion of the October state roundtable as well as the individual campus roundtables. Richard Jonsen again served as meeting facilitator and introduced a keynote speaker in the person of James Gibbons, special assistant to the president and provost for industry relations at Stanford University, as part of the second state roundtable program. Another resource for this roundtable was provided by co-convener Curtis Eaton of the State Board, who provided an overview of the new Institutional Roles and Mission Statement recently approved by the State Board of Education.

There were 43 attendees at the state roundtable including four members of the legislature and a representative of the governor's office. Among the themes of the second roundtable were:

- Does the state funding process/formula impede the ability of higher education to be flexible and adapt to future trends, the changing student clientele, and the needs of the corporate sector?
- While annual funding generally consists of a percentage increase over the previous year's base to accommodate inflation, enrollment fluctuations, and specific institutional requests, should state budget considerations include incentive funding based on performance measures?
- Can institutions simultaneously meet accreditation requirements and specific state needs?

- Is the corporate sector willing to invest new dollars in higher education in order to heighten the expansion and development of Idaho's workforce?
- If considerations of technology infrastructure are inseparably tied to higher education's ability to stay competitive and serve state needs, what improvements or investments must be made in this area? What is the role of the community college?

The second roundtable reiterated the critical need for additional legislator representation. The conveners as well as members of the State Board agreed to concentrate on bringing members of the Joint Legislative Finance Committee, the governor, and other key legislators into the process at the third roundtable planned for the fall.

Interim efforts by co-conveners to increase policymaker participation resulted in attendance at the third roundtable on October 14, 1998 by seven legislators, the governor, and an aide. A review of the participant list also reveals a core group of business/industry leaders who attended all three state roundtables as well as the institutional presidents and members of the State Board. The session was designed to build on the discussions of previous roundtables, which centered around the relationship between higher education, government, and the corporate sector. The focus of the day was on the higher education budget process. In addition, reports on efforts to collaborate, develop partnerships, and pursue initiatives in line with state and industry needs were highlighted together with challenges confronting such efforts. WICHE Executive Director Richard Jonsen again served as the facilitator. Among the themes of the day were the following:

- Installation and improvement of funding mechanisms and incentives which enable and encourage cooperation, flexibility, and proactive behavior are needed.
- Legislative support and flexibility is key to alternative funding solutions and sources.
- A formal feedback and accountability process is needed from the State Board of Education.
- An aggressive recruitment and retention effort must be made for the state's top high school students.
- Particular attention and service must be given to the student population, as well as to those students in need of retraining.
- Continuation of a formal dialogue between higher education, government, and the corporate sector is needed in the form of statewide roundtables.

IV. Outcomes

As part of conducting the case study, a series of onsite interviews were carried out with legislators, regents, university, business, and state leaders in Pierre, South Dakota, on February 17-18, 1999, and with a similar group in Boise, Idaho on February 22-23. Interviewees were asked to describe their initial expectations when invited to participate in the state roundtable: What, if any, outcomes they now attribute to the roundtables and their assessment of the roundtable experience, as well as any anticipated future role the roundtable might play for that state. The planners and conveners of the roundtable were also asked to describe the structure and process for their roundtable and how they determined the participants, as well as to give an assessment of the roles played by the facilitator, by WICHE's Western Policy Exchange project, and by the support of the W. K. Kellogg Foundation grant. Each of the interviewees was asked to identify any changes they would make for their own state and recommendations they would make for other states considering using the roundtable strategy. The two facilitators were interviewed as well to get their views. A brief overview of the results of the interviews will be provided for each state as prologue to an overall analysis of roundtables as a policy change strategy.

South Dakota. Both systemic policy and systemic behavior changes were reported by legislators, higher education leaders, and other state level policymakers in South Dakota. As noted earlier, some system policy change took place during the Pew roundtables in 1995-96. The reinvestment through efficiencies program following the first Pew roundtable was a commitment by the universities and the Board of Regents to identify the equivalent of 10 percent of their state general fund's budget for reallocation to seven priority areas, including technology infrastructure, curriculum redesign, asset protection, economic development partnership, linkages with K-12 education, changes in processes or practice, and centers of excellence. More than $10 million achieved through internal efficiencies was redirected to such priorities by the end of fiscal year 1998. Other self-directed change within the regental system during this time included implementation of new admission standards, new student progression standards, and a student general education proficiency test requirement. While none of these would be claimed as a direct "cause and effect" of the roundtables, there was consensus that the roundtables clearly had contributed to such outcomes. In an August 15, 1996, summary statement, Executive Director Tad Perry concludes: There needs to be a shared commitment to the workings of higher education. In a perfect world, the roundtables would yield a process for establishing a compact between insiders and outsiders for accommodating needed change. An ideal compact would express a shared view of the product expected from higher education and would have a stable resource stream that can be managed in creating this product. It would also have a common vision of how continued change can be achieved and shared between the higher education insiders and outsiders. While years of experience have taught me that this ideal world will likely be always in front of us and never ours to behold, continually working toward it using tools such as the Pew roundtables holds the real potential of effecting meaningful and productive change in higher education. It can also be one of the finest legacies you can leave for the next generation of "insiders and outsiders."

Two significant legislative policy changes were also identified with the WICHE/WPE roundtables by those interviewed during the site visit. The first was the change from an enrollment-driven funding formula for the six universities to a combination base- and incentive-funding budget. This change followed the October 1997 roundtable. In response to later state roundtable discussions of the plight of the universities in maintaining quality when faculty salaries were on average significantly lower than nearby or competing states, the legislature accepted a proposed strategy by the Board of Regents for a salary competitiveness pool of funds to be derived by the board action to reallocate funds by eliminating 114 faculty positions, by a slight increase in student fees over a three-year period, and by the legislature authorizing the board to retain the state appropriation scheduled to be lost due to enrollment declines. In approving this proposal, the legislative policymakers, regents and institutional leadership agreed as a partnership to a new policy of basing faculty raises on performance rather than across the board. The state roundtables were also credited with motivating establishment of systemwide Discipline Councils as well as an Off-Campus Network for Academic Program Delivery, both of which were internal policy changes.

While such policy changes were attributed, at least in part, to the state roundtable process by all the interviewees, another outcome was consistently and prominently identified as significant and valuable for the future of higher education in the state. Without exception, interviewees asserted that changes in behavior took place as a result of the roundtable experience. An eloquent paper prepared after the Pew roundtables, titled *Bridging The Disconnect*, describes how differences between the various constituent groups were candidly and amply reflected in the declaration, "You just don't get it!" together with the admonition that a growing polarization between academics and policymakers represents a gap "we must find ways to bridge." On the one hand, the legislature accused the Board of Regents of not managing the system, while the universities viewed the legislature as ill informed and unwilling to appropriately fund higher education in the state.

Over the four-year state roundtable experience, attitudes and behaviors changed, according to the interviewees. A senior member of the legislature gave his view of the transformation in both the legislature and in higher education. He commented that while chairing the Appropriations Committee, he often accused the six universities of taking advantage of the 365 days available to them to prepare themselves "to beat up on" the legislature during its 40-day session. He proceeded to describe how each university would appear before his Appropriations Committee with its budget request, which he described as a wish list, together with all types of supporting argument and documentation but without much regard for state needs or priorities and clearly focused upon that institution's interest and welfare. He observed that in his own case he had become prone to support the institution in his district, thus inadvertently becoming an institutional advocate rather than one for the state interest. He indicated such had been the tendency and pattern for most members of the Committee in those years, but reasoned it had been due to the Board of Regents' failure to accept its managerial responsibility for a unified system. That same legislator proceeded to praise the roundtables for the new "monumental change" whereby South Dakota now approaches the legislature as a unified system with the executive director of the Board of Regents being the recognized presenter for the higher education system appropriations request.

Several legislators admitted they had used the "power of the purse string" prior to the roundtables as the tactic for forcing change upon higher education in the state. They credited the state roundtables with the behavioral evolution to their contemporary posture of partnering with the unified system in mutual interest of the state and its citizens. One legislator commented, "We learned we didn't speak the same language. When they explained the funding elements of education we discovered 'education means administrative support such as deans and support staff while we had assumed it only referred to instruction.'" He continued, "It really cleared the air when they were told by a publisher, 'You have a journalism degree program but your grads can't write!'" A president of one of the universities observed, "The subtleties of the roundtable are human dynamics...the truest form of democracy where you come together in a different and neutral setting and are able to roll up your sleeves and have it out on an issue. You can ask any question and not feel ignorant!" Several claimed the level of trust has grown on the part of both the legislature and the governor, believing the Board of Regents now is assuming its responsibility for managing a unified system and not deliberately or unintentionally fostering institution-by-institution runs to the legislature.

Idaho: While Idaho had only the two-year WICHE/WPE exposure to the state roundtable process, both policy and behavior changes were identified as outcomes by the interviewees. Interestingly, the Idaho State Board of Education did as the South Dakota Board of Regents by taking the initial policy action internally. The first product was the drafting and adoption of an *Institutional Role and Missions* document, following the first state roundtable. Each president of the state institutions and community colleges worked with the executive director of the State Board to develop the new statement (the first since 1983), designed to be consumer-oriented and focused more on vision, cooperation, and collaboration as well as eleven performance measures. It was observed that the 1983 document had been considered "fixed in time" during the roundtable discussions; hence, the State Board and the institutions wanted to assume the responsibility for verifying outcomes as well as clarifying institutional programmatic emphases.

The legislature responded also by approving incentive funding for scholarships and technology, as requested by the State Board in 1998. In addition, enhancement for salary competitiveness was included in the appropriations bill under consideration at the time of the interviews. A majority of the interviewees expressed the view that the Idaho legislature will move from its strategy of reallocation to a new funding strategy in the years ahead. Several observed that business strategies will increasingly be reflected in both the system and the legislative policies and that multiyear funding rather than the present annual-funding basis will also be a future reality.

The roundtable process was not painless, however. Several presidents admitted they had been intimidated by the "spectator role" assigned to them at the first state roundtable. They believed the "rule" imposed on them resulted in several erroneous perceptions to be perpetuated because they were unable to speak up and correct the misconception. It was also observed several of the presidents did not "buy in" to the process and only gave token effort. When questioned about this claim, a number of the presidents declared it was a historic carryover of "turfmanship" and "territoriality." Since the presidents had been asked to identify and invite key legislators from their region, this token effort was viewed by several interviewees

as the cause for such poor attendance of legislators.

The series of state roundtables together with the campus roundtables is, nevertheless, credited with significant improvement in the cooperation between as well as articulation of programs among the universities and community colleges in Idaho. Several interviewees declared such improved inter-institutional relationships could not have been realized if the state roundtables had not been held. One example given by an official of Micron Industries was a corporate need for a certain engineering technology program in the Boise area, which the Boise State University had been unable to serve due to regulatory constraints. At the first state roundtable, the Micron official described the dilemma and the president of one of the community colleges offered to set up a program to assist Micron. They got together, designed the program, informed Boise State, which gave its blessing, and the program is now in operation with a two-way interactive classroom hook-up between Micron and the community college plus a designated classroom at the company. This particular official had made the declaration at the first state roundtable that as a multinational corporation, Micron would initially seek its workforce needs in the state of residence but if not served by the system in that state, the corporation would be forced to seek the products of other state systems of higher education.

The president of the University of Idaho observed that the state roundtables and the WPE multistate forums has led to an understanding of Idaho's systemic problem by the business, political, and educational communities. He predicted future progress in advancing Idaho's higher education system. He also felt the roundtable effective at the campus level if properly used.

V. Assessment of the Roundtable Process

A number of interviewees in both states declared they originally had been skeptics about the usefulness of the state roundtable process and had attended only because of a genuine interest in higher education or as a result of loyalty to his/her responsibility professionally. One observed, "I typically avoid 'whiner sessions.'" Without exception, these interviewees described an evolution from skeptic to believer and then to advocate. A total of 39 leaders and policymakers were interviewed in the two states. Every single one declared his/her state's roundtable experience had been successful and believed it should be continued as a tool for systemic change. When asked to provide an assessment of the process, the degree of specificity related to the role of the individual. The planners and sponsors understandably were more detailed and specific in their assessment than the attendees from the various participant groups.

Ownership Role. First, it is critical that ownership be assumed in order for consistent direction and planning to keep the process purposeful. There must be clear purposes in mind also. Furthermore, as presented in the schematic later (see Table 1), the process must be seen as a five- to six-year endeavor if the full potential is to be realized. In the case of South Dakota, Executive Director Tad Perry and the Board of Regents clearly assumed this role at the beginning and continue to do so for the future. The legislature, governor, and university presidents clearly expect such ownership and direction.

In Idaho, ownership was shared initially, probably because the incumbent executive director of the State Board was leaving and knew he would not be available throughout the process. Senator John Hansen and President Charles Ruch, therefore, shared planning and organizing of the first state roundtable with State Board member Curtis Eaton. President Ruch and his staff served in the coordinator role, ever conscious that they needed to avoid the perception that Boise State University had a vested interest in the effort. The territorial "turfmanship" historically present in Idaho made President Ruch's job most sensitive and delicate. Interviewees were high in praise for Dr. Ruch's efforts and none expressed the view Boise State had taken advantage of its roundtable coordination role. However, at the time of the site interviews, a new ownership model was being strongly considered. Since the new State Board Executive Director, Gregory Fitch, is now on board and actually attended the last two state roundtables, it is envisioned he will succeed as coordinator with the State Board as owner. However, it is being proposed that an executive committee or steering committee be established with a few key representatives from the legislature, governor's office, business/industry (IACI), the Council of Presidents, and the State Board, which would provide the planning and scheduling of each future state roundtable. This could produce more focused and issue specific discussion.

To be effective, the owner/planner role must include determination of the best time for the roundtable events, recognizing the heavy demands on legislatures during the session and their election season, as well as the calendars of the other constituencies represented. Logistics, promotional materials, and content/issue background materials must also be part of this responsibility. Both states provided participants with background/position papers prior to their initial state roundtable. Both then shared notes from the meetings as followup with the attendees. South Dakota provides a clear view of moving from general to specific or from discussion toward agenda building and action. The last state roundtable in South Dakota built on the notes of the previous

meeting, but due to the nature of the discussion during the latest one, no written notes were produced. Idaho appears to be following a similar path, now posed to begin the issue focus phase of roundtable evolution with compelling position papers envisioned. It was apparent that having a purpose, knowing the context as well as the divergency of the constituent groups, and setting the rules are major responsibilities of the owner/planners.

Convener Role. Those whose position, reputation, contacts, or status to attract participants and give legitimacy to the roundtable event play a significant role in the success of early roundtables. Conveners are often used during the planning of the event for participant selection. For both case study states, members of the legislature served as conveners and played the important multifaceted roles in preparation for and during the event. It should also be noted that both coordinators and conveners for the case study states also were WICHE Commissioners, which clearly added to their credibility and drawing power. Conveners need to encourage participation through direct contact, personal invitation and follow-up calls in order to be effective. In Idaho, Senator John Hansen was so well known and respected throughout the state that interviewees credited him with attracting many of the corporate CEOs who attended the first and subsequent roundtables.

Facilitator Role. There was unanimous agreement by interviewees that the facilitator plays a critical role in establishing the environment for openness and willingness to be candid by each roundtable participant. The facilitator must be knowledgeable about the subject when a focused issue is the primary purpose of the roundtable event. The facilitator must also keep the discussion sufficiently focused that the group has a sense of direction and each participant feels some form of closure at the end of the day. One interviewee observed, "When we first begin, we seem to speak different languages and hold quite different beliefs in how change should take place. But in reality, each of us participate because we truly believe in a common or ultimate good and it is this which unites us in our quest for change."

A state might seek a facilitator for one roundtable whose style and strength is in group dynamics in order to facilitate open-ended discussion, as Idaho did in selecting Dick Jonsen of WICHE. When a state is ready for a more focused issue discussion, it may seek a facilitator who has knowledge about the specific content being discussed as South Dakota did by having Dennis Jones of NCHEMS serve during the session on state funding issues. Both facilitators expressed the view that the role requires vigilance in keeping the group focused and in making participation inclusive while being as unobtrusive as possible.

Roundtable Meeting Size. There was consensus that the optimum roundtable group should be between 25-30 participants. This number can easily be seated around the table (whether it is circular or square), enabling each to speak freely and openly during the deliberations. Several WICHE states which were part of the WPE and Kellogg project did have much larger groups (approximately 150 in one case). However, these were initial meetings, intended to be open-ended discussion about the general circumstances of higher education and not on a give topic. Breakout sessions during the day were used to compensate for the large number and ensure each attendee an opportunity to speak. South Dakota has begun to have small groups sequentially meeting to shape action plans and then use a larger roundtable to create consensus for direction and action.

VI. Assessment of Roundtables as a Policy Change Strategy

Systemic Change. An early concept of systemic change which guided the WICHE/WPE project grew out of discussions at the multistate forums and included many of the conveners of the state roundtables. An early concept paper commissioned by WICHE on systemic change in higher education identified five actions believed to be critical to the process as policymakers assess present performance of their higher education systems in light of state priorities and the performance they believe will be necessary to meet future needs. These were:

- Assessing system performance in relation to state priorities.
- Structuring the policy environment to establish or clarify lines of authority and communication between state government and the system of institutions.
- Organizing the institutional environment (e.g., role and mission assignment).
- Improving or establishing system capacity by determining who will be served, when, by which types of programs, and with what technology.
- Financing the system to accomplish the most cost-effective way of achieving state priorities.

Each of the five actions lends itself to a series of questions on any given topic which state roundtables can use to guide discussion. South Dakota clearly followed this process on the funding of higher education in that state. Idaho appears ready to move to the specific issues and will find the WICHE concept helpful in agenda building.

Term Limits. An unanticipated issue came up during interviews of legislators at both state capitols which promoted a hypothetical question added to those for the case study. While testifying to the future success and value of the state roundtable process as a result of their participation, several legislators cautioned that a major barrier to that success would be the recent term limit requirement which will mean the loss of some of the key senior members of the legislature. It was observed that new members will not have the historical continuity such senior members have provided in the past. It was believed all public policy could suffer from this requirement. Therefore, each time this issue came up, the interviewee was asked if the state roundtable process might actually help in the orientation of the new members. As reported earlier, Tad Perry had been strategically including a few new legislators as well as maintaining the participation of the key members. He also carried out regional roundtables this past year as part of the revitalization and recycling of the state roundtable. Typically, when asked about the roundtable as a counter force to the term limit problem, interviewees agreed they might. However, one seasoned majority leader thought for a moment and then declared the use of the roundtable for term limits would be ill advised and unsuccessful. He proceeded to explain that the roundtable is about consensus building while the basic issue related to term limits is political power. He explained the dilemma of term limits is the short time a politician has to obtain a leadership position and garner a power base. The solution in his judgement is the creation of additional opportunities for new legislators to get into leadership positions. Thus, it involves the legislature creating such opportunities through restructuring rather than through a tool like the roundtable.

Schematic of the Roundtable Process. In hindsight, it appears the three-year project was too brief to completely develop a process which would produce verifiable systemic change. Several of the state roundtable conveners lamented that the W. K. Kellogg Foundation grant was not for five or more years. They sincerely believe systemic change is possible and the roundtable is an effective tool which states can use to achieve that goal. Based on observations of the key leaders for the state roundtables in South Dakota and Idaho, a schematic flow of the process was developed which may be helpful to states considering this tool for future use in gaining systemic change (see Table 1).

Table 1

Stages of Roundtable Evolution

Years Needed	Developmental Stage	Activities
1-2	Socialization	• Determine nature and state of "disconnect" • Accept others' roles/responsibilities • Self appraisal and accept "common good" goal • Seek cooperation/collaborative actions • Build toward partnership alliances/actions
2-3	Priority Setting	• Identify the issues, challenges, opportunities • Establish state and system goals • Set priorities based on realities and constraints • Determine readiness and timeliness • Assess key players
3-4	Agenda Building	• Determine courses of action • Analyze prospects and action requirements • Set game plan and timetable • Enlist key players/supporters
4-5	Action	• Implement strategy • Monitor progress and adjust as needed • Assess outcomes and prepare for next cycle
5-6	Revitalization and Recycling	• Recognize past achievers, achievements • Recycle • Enlist, orient, support new stakeholders/ policymakers • Increase public awareness, understanding efforts

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Idaho's three state roundtables essentially occurred within a twelve-month period. While several interviewees lamented that the state was still in the Socialization stage rather than Priority Setting, there was consensus that the roundtables had succeeded and genuine belief the State Board's commitment to continue the process would lead to Agenda Building and Action.

South Dakota clearly has progressed in the "fast lane" whereby it can document major systemic change policy. Executive Director Tad Perry also recognizes the critical importance of the Revitalization and Recycling stage. He has unobtrusively invited selected new legislators while keeping certain key senior members in an attempt to orient future leadership in the process.

Institutionalization. As the evolutionary stages were conceptualized and discussed with key state roundtable interviewees, the question of future stability and even permanence came up. If the state roundtable was being seen as such an effective tool for systemic change, then could it be institutionalized? When the executive director of the South Dakota Board of Regents was asked what would happen if he were to leave, he reflected and then commented any successor would probably not use the tool since such a leader would understandably institute his/her own change strategy. When the chairman of the South Dakota Board of Regents was asked the same question, he immediately declared the state roundtable has been such a valuable and effective tool that the board would actually establish knowledge of and commitment to the roundtable process as one of the criteria for employing a successor executive director.

While no such question was posed for Idaho, it would seem similar results will occur if the state continues along the evolutionary stages described and has the direction and support of the proposed "executive/steering committee" from the five key constituencies as reported earlier.

VII. Conclusions, Implications for Other States, and Recommendations

Conclusions. The three goals of the WPE project presented at the beginning of this paper were achieved. There is documentable evidence that policymaking has been improved, resulting in both institutional transformation and systemic change in higher education. The coordinated approach of multistate forums held throughout the region and the state roundtables proved to be effective for developing specific strategies to advance systemic reforms in higher education. Furthermore, shared problems and opportunities seem to be contributing to regional solutions and efficiencies. An important unanticipated outcome of the state roundtable process was the behavioral change in the different constituent groups, which now suggests the process might be considered for this benefit alone. Both South Dakota and Idaho would be good resources for states seeking an understanding of realities, requirements, and potential of the roundtable process.

Implications. Based on the experiences of South Dakota and Idaho, as well as the perceptions of key players in their state roundtables, the following implications are suggested:

- An understanding and belief in the roundtable process is essential if it is to be successfully employed as a systemic change tool.
- WICHE is a valuable resource for assisting in planning, organizing, and implementing the roundtable process for its region, as well as providing advice and counsel for other regions in the country.
- Ownership is critical to success, which requires a certain belief in the need for systemic change and a willingness to assume the risks in giving leadership and direction.
- A state roundtable must be designed with the uniqueness of the state in mind.
- Care must be taken in selection of participants.
- Background papers can be helpful for orienting and focusing participants.
- In spite of the potential for journalistic sensationalism, some states can have the press in attendance even in open discussion stages of the state roundtable.
- State roundtables can lead to both institutional as well as systemic change.
- Although different constituent groups embrace quite different beliefs and approaches, there is a "common good," universal which is the basis for success of the roundtable process.
- Trust building is most effective when a constituent group takes the initiative to address its own internal shortcomings on a particular issue before expecting other groups to take corrective initiatives at their level.
- The cycle for effective use of the roundtable process for systemic change is between five and six years.

Recommendations. It is recommended that WICHE seek additional external financial support to assist member states to use the roundtable tool over a five- or six-year period in order to verify the long-term benefits of the process for achieving systemic change. It is further recommended that key leaders in the current project be asked to serve as an advisory panel for future WICHE roundtable efforts. Finally, it is recommended that the W. K. Kellogg Foundation consider a grant to build on the accomplishments of the WPE project.